

Notes on Plotinus - Ennead One, First Tractate - The Animated Body and the Self

1. **The Categories of Human Experience**

The nature of a human being can be divided into three sections:

1. Base level sensory perceptions and emotions (usually relegated by Plotinus to the Unreasoning soul)
2. Discursive reasoning about simple concepts, perceptions, and feelings (usually relegated by Plotinus to the Reasoning soul)
3. Intellectual reasonings and decision making based on abstract concepts, and ideal forms. (usually relegated by Plotinus to the Intellectual soul).

The 'seat' of each of these sections, must reside in one of three possible places.

- a. the soul alone
- b. the soul, separated from the body, while it using the body like a tool
- c. the soul connected with the body to use it, forming a new distinct entity from the synthesis

Further, if c., then it could either be a mere blending of the two (i.e. reductionism, half soul half body), or a distinct new compound phenomena arising from the combination.

Since all human feeling and thinking begins with our emotional and sensory reactions (our 'inputs' so to speak) we must begin by assessing their set.

2. **The Soul Alone Is Not the Seat of Perceptions and Senses**

Do our base level sensory perceptions and emotions (I. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, Section 1) have their seat in the soul alone (a. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, Section 1)?

Answering this question requires us to determine whether or not we should distinguish between the soul of an individual person, and of the group of things referred to souls (the category of things known as Souls). To illustrate why, consider cars. All cars have four wheels, but only some cars are the color red. So, we can say that having wheels is an attribute of the category cars, however being red is only an attribute of particular cars.

Assume we can make a distinction between the individual soul of a person and the category 'souls'. Then the individual soul must be a composite of all of the smaller particulars which make up that person (these particulars being what differentiates a particular soul from other individual souls, like the redness of some cars). In this case a soul is particular to an individual, and it makes sense then that the base level emotions and sensory perceptions of an individual could be experienced by the individual soul. This is because its variances from individual to individual permit changes (as opposed to something eternal), and an allowance for change permits the reception of information (as the reception of information changes the recipient).

However, if a distinction is NOT to be made between individual souls and the category of souls, then a soul would be an essence (Ousia), and consequently it would be the Ideal Form of 'souls'. An Ideal Form is unchanging and eternal. Thus, in this case there would be no room for the soul to be altered by the reception of sensory information. As a result, if a distinction is NOT to be made

between individual souls and the category of souls then, sense perceptions cannot have their seat in the soul. After all, how can an eternal and unchanging Ideal Form be modified by an individual instance of it? To illustrate the point, consider that it is impossible to make any changes to the geometric rules which make up a triangle by modifying a particular triangularly shaped object. Consequently, if all souls are merely the Ideal Form of 'soul', then a soul can only be a one-way provider of information, and it could only provide information to things which come into existence after the Ideal Form is codified.

Now, if we consider further the consequences of the human soul being an Ideal Form, we must realize that an unchanging thing has no basis for our base level emotions and perceptions. It is unchangeable, so it is not receptive to the transient circumstances which induce emotions and senses. Nothing can destroy it, so it has no basis for fear. It is always whole, so it has no basis for want of 'less' or 'more' of anything. It cannot be dissected, so how could it lose anything to feel loss?

As a result, we must conclude that base level sensory perceptions and emotions cannot have their seat in the Ideal Form of the soul alone (a. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, Section 1).

Since base level sensory perceptions and emotions are a part of the human experience (of which the soul partakes), and since them having their seat in the soul alone is impossible, we must then regard human souls as individual aggregates of smaller parts.

Thus, the soul of a human is an individual soul, and it is an aggregate comprised of smaller parts.

Discursive reasoning about simple concepts, perceptions, and feelings (II. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, Section 1) exclusively deals with base level sensory perceptions and emotions. Thus, Discursive reasoning too (usually relegated by Plotinus to the Reasoning soul) cannot have its seat in the Ideal Form of a soul for the same reasons as outlined above.

Intellectual reasoning and pure experiences of higher order truths (III. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, Section 1), however, are not negated by the above reasoning, as this level of reasoning only deals with things within the realm of Ideal Forms. Consequently, we cannot rule out this category of the human experience as having its seat in the Ideal Form of souls, and this topic requires further inquiry later on.

3. The Soul Cannot Use The Body if Separated Completely From It

Do our base level sensory perceptions and emotions (I. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, Section 1) have their seat in the soul, separated from the body, while it using the body like a tool (b. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, Section 1)?

In the case that 'the soul uses the body', it is not necessarily the case that the soul shares in the base level emotions, instincts, and sensory perceptions of the physical body. Allegorically, a person blowing air through an instrument does not directly experience all of the base sensations that the instrument would. Yet the musician needs some knowledge of the state of the instrument to play it, and thus the human soul needs some way of interfacing with the base level perceptions and experiences of its body to appropriately process them. Since b. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, Section 1 preclude the soul receiving any information, it cannot account for our base level sense perceptions and emotions and must be disregarded.

Since base level sensory perceptions and emotions are a part of the human experience, and since the human soul partakes in the human experience, and since options A and B from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, Section 1 are insufficient to allow the soul to partake in base level sensory perceptions and emotions, then we must conclude that C is the correct choice.

Base level sensory perceptions and emotions arise from the soul connecting with the body to use it, forming a new distinct entity from the synthesis.

We can refer to new entity created from the synthesis of soul and body as the Animated Body (alternatively referred to as the Animate Man and the Living Organism).

Since the soul would have to direct the body based in part on these base level perceptions and emotions, it would have to get the information somehow. Yet if the soul is separated from the body, the 'how' is mysterious. It cannot be that the Ideal Form of souls experienced these things directly, as that would cause all human being to experience all of the perceptions and emotions of every other human being (another reason to not regard the soul of a human being as merely the Ideal Form of souls). Further, in analyzing the possibility that the soul uses the body like musician playing an instrument, there must be some separation for there to be a 'user' (e.g. musician) and a 'used' (e.g. instrument). In this case, the practice of Philosophy might be described as the act which bridges the gap between the soul and the body and allowing the soul to use the body in such a manner. In this sense, the definition of Philosophy might be to intake information via the Unreasoning Soul, direct these base level perceptions and emotions through the Reasoning Soul via Discursive Reasoning, with the aim of this processes being to allow the Intellectual soul the possibility of gaining wisdom about the eternal metaphysical truths.

However, before an individual can engage in Philosophy to help bridge the gap between the soul and body, what is the relationship between soul (whose highest part makes decisions) and body (which directly feels and senses)? There must be some innate connection, however there are multiple possibilities.

- A. They are completely coalesced, and connected at every place.
- B. They can be interwoven uniformly, but not completely connected at every place.
- C. The soul could merely direct the body without making any contact (i.e. they are only connected via the flow of information/instruction from one to the other).
- D. Some specific parts of the soul can be 'coupled' only to some specific parts of the body, with the rest of the parts of each unconnected.

Further, if D., then part of the soul that is not connected to the body would be the 'musician' or 'user', and the part of the soul connected to the body would then lower itself to the level of 'instrument' or 'used'. In turn, Philosophy elevates the connected part of the body to the level of 'musician' or 'user', and equally allows the detached sections of the soul and body to remain detached as is useful.

4. The Possible Relationships Between Soul And Body

If the soul and body are completely coalesced (A. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, section 3), then the soul is brought down to the material realm in this binding, and the body is elevated in part to the realm of the soul. Would this mixture cause the soul to then give rise to

base level sensations and emotions, or would the mixture cause the body to give rise to the base level sensations and emotions? It cannot be that the soul gains a new capability (sensations and emotions) because it is being degraded (from the realm of immortality to the realm of death), and thus it can only stand to lose capabilities. The body, on the other hand becomes enriched via its association with the soul and can gain capabilities as a result. As such, in the case of coalescence, base level sensations and emotions (I. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, Section 1) must reside in the enriched body as a result of the admixture. Thus, the coalescing of soul and body does not provide a proper explanation for how the soul receives base level sense perceptions and emotions, as it can only account for the experiences of the body.

What if a soul is interwoven with the body (B. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, section 3)? Some things are incommensurate (meaning they have no possible things in common), such as color and things which are invisible. If the soul and body are interwoven, then they would have to be commensurate in some way. Since the soul and body seem to be incommensurate in actuality, we already have a good reason to reject this possibility. Further, even if the soul is mixed with the body, it does not necessarily mean that it would share the body's sensations. The soul could remain unchanged as it penetrates the body. For example, when light floods into a dark room, its fundamental nature is not altered by occupying the previously dark area. Thus, even if a soul is interwoven with the body, we should still regard base level senses and emotions as residing in the body. Thus, a soul interwoven with the body does not provide a proper explanation for how the soul receives base level sense perceptions and emotions.

What if the soul could merely direct the body without any contact (C. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, section 3)? If that is the case, then the human soul would be like an Ideal Form realized in matter, like a piece of metal (representing the body) formed into the shape of an axe (representing the Ideal Form of a soul). In this case, there is no point of connection for the soul to take part in base level senses and emotions, and once again we must regard them as residing in the body. Thus, the soul merely directing the body without any contact cannot provide a proper explanation for how the soul receives base level sense perceptions and emotions.

Since the soul must receive information regarding base level senses perceptions and emotions in some way, and since A, B, and C from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate section 3 are insufficient to explain such a transmission of information, we must conclude that D is true.

The soul and body are able to share information regarding base level senses and perceptions via some parts of the soul being coupled with some parts of the body, with the rest of the parts of each remaining unconnected.

5. The Nature of the Animated Body

Regarding the nature of the Animated Body, we have three possibilities.

- i. The base level experiences of the Animated Body may merely be a purely physical phenomena felt within the body alone (the information being transferred to the soul second hand).
- ii. The base level experiences of the Animated Body may be the result of a reductionist conjunction of the soul and the body (with the soul and body experiencing them simultaneously).

- iii. The base level experiences of the Animated Body may be experienced by a third distinct entity (aggregate) formed from soul and body which is distinct and presents new capabilities not found in either the soul or the body.

Regardless of the above three options, we have two other possible considerations:

1. The soul is experientially impassible and only the body experiences things directly.
2. The soul is sympathetic, and experiences that which the body does.

Considering ii. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, section 5: How could a conjunction between parts of the body and the soul account for a negative emotion?

Is the premise that 'experiences start in the body and make their way to the soul' an adequate explanation of the experiences from the Animated Body? It could be that a sensory organ generates sensory perceptions in response to some stimulus, which then afterwards reach the soul. But that really just describes the fact that someone senses something negative. It does not explain why the thing that is sensed was taken to be negative in the first place. Descriptions are not explanations. Saying that my eyes saw someone act immorally, and as a result I felt angry does not explain *why* such a sensory experience evokes the feeling of anger in me. Thus, this is an inadequate explanation.

Is the premise that 'experiences start in the soul and make their way to the body' an adequate explanation of the experiences from the Animated Body? It could be that emotions are merely the result of an intellectual judgement that wrongdoing has occurred, giving rise to a particular state of the body associated with a felt emotion in response. But this does not explain *why* the experiencer of the negative emotion judged that some thing or action constituted wrongdoing in the first place. Further, it raises the question as to where the seat of this value judgement was: in the soul alone, or a result of the conjunction of the soul and body? Also, not all judgments result in an emotional response. One can judge an act as wrong, but not feel any emotion as result. Thus, this is an inadequate explanation.

Is the premise that 'experiences exist simultaneously in the soul and body' an adequate explanation of the experiences from the Animated Body? Is it possible that each desire felt in the soul has a corresponding physical state of the body? Some experiences can be explained via bodily functions, such as the feeling of hunger being the result of a lack of food in the stomach. Morality based emotions, however, do not have an obvious physical source. Various experiences seem to come from the body or the soul exclusively.

Could a *reasoned desire* in the soul coincide with a *sensed appetite* in the body simultaneously? This is impossible, because this implies that a sensed appetite cannot exist without a reasoned desire, and because it implies a reasoned desire cannot exist without a sensed appetite. It is possible to experience a sensed appetite without engaging in any reasoning. Someone can feel thirsty without doing and reasoning. It is possible to reason one's way into a particular conclusion without feeling any sensed appetites'. I can think to myself that it is hot out and reason that I should probably take a drink without feeling thirsty. Thus, this is an inadequate explanation.

Since experiences starting in the soul and making way to the body is an inadequate explanation for the experiences of the Animated Body, and since experiences starting in the body and making way to the soul is an inadequate explanation for the experiences of the Animated Body, and since experiences existing simultaneously in the soul and body is an inadequate explanation for the experiences of the Animated Body, then we must conclude that II. from first tractate, section 5 is not an adequate explanation for the experiences of the Animated Body.

The base level experiences of the Animated Body are not the result of a reductionist conjunction of the soul and the body.

6. Experiences Do Not Exist Within The Body Alone

Considering i. from notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, section 5: Does the premise that base level experiences of the Animated Body exist as a purely physical phenomena felt within the body alone (with the information being transferred to the soul second hand) provide an adequate explanation for the experiences of the Animated Body?.

This is a challenging assertion. A soulless body (i.e. a dead body) is unable to sense anything. Thus, the presence of soul is required for sense perceptions to occur at all. How could the sensory experiences of the Animate both require soul, but not have their seat in the soul? The soul would have to act as a one-way inducer of the mechanisms which produce senses (e.g. the soul could start up the mechanics of the eyes and brain, allowing them to work in conjunction to see). Yet in this case, the soul would be unable to receive any of this sensory data. Since the soul uses sensory information to reason and make decisions, it must be able to receive it.

Since base level experiences of the Animated Body existing as a purely physical phenomena does not permit said experiences to reach the soul, and since the soul must receive that information to perform the functions it has, we must conclude that base level experiences of the Animated Body cannot exist as a purely physical phenomena.

The base level experiences of the Animated Body are not merely be a purely physical phenomena felt within the body alone.

7. The Animated Body - Best Explained as A New Aggregate Entity Formed Of Soul and Body

Since a reductionist conjunction of soul and body does not explain the experiences of an Animated Body, and since a purely physical phenomena within the body does not explain the experiences of an Animated Body, then we must conclude that the experiences of an Animated Body can only be explained by soul and body coming to form a distinct new aggregate entity which possess capabilities not found in either the soul or body alone.

The base level experiences of the Animated Body are experienced by a third distinct entity (aggregate) formed from soul and body which is distinct and presents new capabilities not found in either the soul or the body.

How do soul and body come together to form a new aggregate we call the Animated Body, which is greater than the sum of its parts?

First, it requires that the body be in an appropriate state for life. From there soul animates the body, producing an Animated Body. This is not to say that the soul enters into the body to

animate it. Rather, the soul consists in the metaphysical principles which govern the animation of the body. Put more plainly, take the examples of thought. A person's thoughts do not exist in the matter of the brain itself, nor in the electricity which traverse through our neurons, nor do they exist solely in the pure metaphysical realm of Ideal Forms. Rather, the thoughts exist in the pattern (governed by metaphysical principles) in which the electricity flows between the neurons in the brain. By taking the physical neurons of the brain, along with the electrical impulses of the brain, and by forming them into specific motions of the electricity through the brain, we end up with a thinking brain which possesses capabilities none of its single parts contain.

Thus, our experiences are not separated from the physical organs we possess, nor from the higher principles which determine the mechanisms by which they must operate in order to produce said experiences.

How can a new aggregate we call the Animated Body explain sensory perceptions? The soul does not directly experience the sense-perceptions, but rather these are impressed on the physical sense organs of the body. The soul takes the base level sensory perceptions and relates them to higher Inelibles from the realm of Ideal Forms.

These sensory perceptions are related and identified with Ideal Forms which the soul can grasp. We can then engage in Discursive Reasoning as the soul directs thought from Ideal Form to Ideal form as is characteristic of Discursive reasoning.

The principle that directs information through the phases of the soul, from the base level sensory perceptions and emotions, through the rounds of Discursive reasoning, and finally to true Intellectual understanding is that which we refer to as 'our self'.

And while 'our self' possesses the powers of each phase of the soul, what we refer to as a Human Being is the higher order decision making which is the hallmark of the Human. Humanity's excellence among the animals in reasoning serve to differentiate humanity from the beasts which can only engage in base level sense perceptions (the irrational soul) and those animals which can only dabble in discursive reasoning (the reasoning soul).

8. Intellectual Participation and The Animated Body

In understanding how the Animated Body may possess intelligence, we must investigate the Ideal Form of Intelligence itself. The form itself exists first as a purely intelligible concept, completely separate (and anterior to) the physical realm in which the Animated Body reside. Yet it is participatable, and every Animated Body participates in the Ideal Form of Intelligence by possession of intelligence and intellectual abilities.

This principle holds true for each Ideal Form. We all participate in the eternal metaphysical variant of the Ideal Form, but possess our own personal conception of it individually. For example, if we take the Ideal Form of a house, it has its own objective metaphysical meaning. Yet if you ask an individual to picture a house or to describe what a house is, each individual will have a slight (or even sometimes great) variation on how they picture and describe it.

And what is our relationship with the Divine? The Divine exists beyond the material realm. It exists in the realm of Ideal Forms (Nous), and further in Pure Being (The One) without any

distinctions (which precedes any of the distinctions necessary for separate Intelligible Forms to exist).

We participate by being variant manifestations of the universal Ideal Forms we are associated with. For example, we share in the Divinity of intelligence, by participating in it via possession of intelligence and intellectual abilities. These Ideal Forms retain their essence as individual principals, but also end up manifest as multiple variants resulting from possible differences of non-essential features. For example, the Ideal Form of a car remains its own undivided principle. Yet it becomes varied in that there are cars of different colors, sizes, and intended functions. Each variant of a car is a part of the single, undivided Ideal Form of cars, but also possess individuality among all cars via its attributes.

Since the Soul is a collection of the metaphysical properties of an individual, the Soul of an Animated Body too participates in the single, undivided Ideal Form of Souls, but also exists as the individual Animated Body which can be distinguished among all of the Souls of Animated Bodies.

Further, because a Soul has Being (it exists), it also counts as a part of Pure Being (The One). If we take the whole of 'everything', the Soul is included in this singular unified thing. No amount of variation within 'everything' may discount or diminish the concept of 'everything' itself which contains the variations.

It is the Soul which dictates the animation of the material body to form the Animated Body. The Soul does so not by intermixing with the body, but rather by existing as an individual Ideal Form which the body participates in via its physical properties and their motions. Thus, we are variant 'copies' of the various Ideal Forms which make up the aggregate soul.

The initial forms in which the physical body participates in are those which comprise base level sense perceptions and emotions. As more and more forms aggregate around the Soul, the capabilities of the Animated Body increase, resulting finally in the capabilities of producing children. Though the body produces variant copies of itself materially into new material bodies (i.e. reproduction/childbirth), the Soul produces new variant Ideal forms as chains of rational necessity. Each 'link' in this chain produces further rational necessities in an unending chain. For example, the concept of quantity produces necessarily the various individual quantities (e.g. 1,2,3,4...). The various individual quantities necessitate the formation the differing groups of quantities (e.g. odd, even, etc). And so on. Thus, the Soul and The body engage in the same activity (Demiurgy), but at different levels/realms. The body materially, the Soul metaphysically.

9. **The Flaws of the Animated Body Cause Evil, Not The Soul**

As discussed earlier from (notes on Ennead One, First Tractate, Section 2), the soul is outside of the realm of evils (such as fear, pain, death, etc.) which a body is subject to, and which it may subject other bodies to. Consequently, these evils must reside in the aggregate Animated Body.

Yet does it really make sense to say that our soul is not culpable to the evil acts our body engages in? This would be especially surprising considering two things: a. the soul is responsible for the final judgement made during any decision. b. the soul guides the mind from subject to subject during discursive reasoning.

It makes sense if we consider that such evils only occur if the higher parts of our soul (Intellection and Reason) are disregarded in favor of base level emotions and perceptions, or if we are too hasty in our reasoning and come to the wrong conclusion.

If our base level senses and perceptions cause an initial reaction without involving the powers of the soul, the soul is not culpable as it never even had a chance to perceive those base level sensations (let alone to intervene and steer the body in the right direction).

If we are too quick to come to a conclusion, the problem is that our powers of Discursive Reasoning have concluded too quickly without properly deferring to a final judgement. Thus, once again the Soul itself is not culpable, as it had no way of intervening.

Given this insight we can make a clear distinction:

Base level sense perceptions and emotions belong to the Animated Body, information being sensed by the body and reaching the soul via the points at which the soul and body are coupled.

Discursive reasoning belongs to the Animated Body, as the body senses things, and the soul directs reason through these base level perceptions.

Finally, Intellectual reasoning, the true understanding of abstract concepts and the final decision-making power resides in the soul alone.

Since evils are always the result of base level senses being accepted without reason, or with reasoning that was faulty due to a lack of full understanding, we must conclude that the soul, which understands, is not culpable in evil.

Evil belongs with the Animated Body alone.

10. **Things Which Belong to the Soul and Things Which Belong to the Animated Body**

There is a notable objection to the notion that our soul is meaningfully distinguishable from the body. When we refer to 'our self', we often refer to the previously defined aggregate Animated Body, which is both body and soul. So we say that the 'our self' has passions (by saying that 'I am passionate'), and we say that the 'our self' takes various actions (by saying 'I did that'). Namely, we claim for 'our self' the things we have previously in this tractate isolated as separate from ourselves. For example, we refer to 'our pain' (which in theory is only felt by the body, but then transferred to the soul via a complement).

The source of all of this confusion is that we use terms such as 'I', 'Me', 'Myself' etc. in two different ways to refer to different concepts. *Connotatively*, we refer to 'our self' meaning both the soul and the body as a matter of convention for everyday life. *Denotatively*, in a more strict philosophically minded way, we refer to 'our self' as meaning the soul alone.

It is this *denotative* notion of 'our self' as referring to the soul alone which is technically correct. Our passions and senses only have access to the soul via the complement with the body, and as such are only applicable to the soul while it animates a physical body. The true understanding of Ideal Forms is always to be found in the soul alone, whether directly if detached from a material body, or via Philosophy while coupled with a body. Because the intellectual reasoning (Intellectual

Soul) is the only thing which the soul possesses no matter what, we may call it the human soul's essence, and correctly refer to this as the ultimate 'our self'.

For example, things which deal with local customs and traditions (and are thus to a degree subjective) belong to the coupled Animated Body.

All vices based on base level sensory perceptions and emotions, such as envy, jealousy, and pity belong to the coupled Animated Body (because that is where such base level emotions and senses have their seat).

Friendship is an interesting case. So far as friendship exists to sate the base level sensory perceptions and emotions (as is the case with envy, jealousy, and pity), it belongs to the Animated Body. Friendship, which is based on a mutual Intellectual understanding, however, belongs to the soul.

11. The Intellectual Soul and the Self

In some cases, usually when a human is younger and less wise (and only really concerned with base level sensory perceptions and emotions, i.e. the Unreasoning Soul), things like friendship serve the Animated Body. As we age and our minds are able to better contemplate the higher realm of the soul, we can better engage the higher order principles via the soul alone. Once we are able to engage in Discursive Reasoning (the Reasoning Soul, and the 'middle' portion of the human soul), we can start to interact with these higher principles and begin to gain understanding into them.

Given that Intellectual Soul (the understanding of Ideal Forms) belongs to the soul alone, is it really fair to say that it belongs to 'our self'? We say that the Unreasoning Soul and Reasoning Soul belong to 'our self', but they belong to the coupled Animated Body.

The answer is yes, the Intellectual Soul belongs to 'our self', but only when we are actively engaged in the contemplation of higher principles (i.e. Philosophy). We do so via using Discursive Reasoning, but focusing it on the higher principles which are typical of the Intellectual Soul, as opposed to focusing our Discursive Reasoning on the lower principles of the Unreasoning Soul. When we are not actively engaged with the higher principles, they only potentially belong to us, the potential only being actualized if we end up engaging with them actively.

What can we say of the less intelligent animals of the world? One idea goes that the soul of a Human and the soul of an Animal are the same, but the soul ended up in an unintelligent animal body due to its sins. As a result, the Soul does not completely couple with their animal bodies, and the Animated Body they become only gains the powers of the Unreasoning Soul and the Reasoning Soul. In particularly unintelligent animals, such as insects, they may only possess the basic powers of the Unreasoning Soul. In extreme cases, the least intelligent only participate in the lowest parts of the Ideal Form of 'animation' (the universal soul).

12. The Difference Between the Essence of a Soul and the Lower Phases of the Soul

Above it has been argued (Notes on Ennead One, First Tractate Section 9 and 10) that sins do not belong to the soul. Yet if that is true, then how do we reconcile that with the belief that the soul is punished for its sins (whether in Hades, Hell, and/or various reincarnations)?

It has been previously argued that the soul has different elements (The Unreasoning Soul, The Reasoning Soul, and the Intellectual Soul). We have differentiated these elements from the pure essence of soul (the ideal form of the individual's soul). As such, it is possible that sin belongs to the elements of the soul without belonging to the soul in its essence.

To clarify, we will discuss how the soul essence gains additional elements. Initially, the soul is merely an essence (the Ideal Form of an individual). At what we refer to as the birth of this soul, the lower phases of the soul come into being. These lower phases of the soul are not some form of the essence/ideal form itself, but rather iterative variants congruent with the essence. The lower phases of the soul are lower ordered entities which participate in the metaphysical properties of the essence/ideal form of the soul. For example, the ideal form of a car allows individual makes and models of cars to physically exist, and they participate in the 'carness' of the Ideal Form of cars. Just as we cannot blame the ideal form of cars for the consequences related to a defective individual car, we cannot blame the ideal form of human beings for the consequences related to the action of an evil individual human being. For another example, a light cannot be blamed for a shadow. Rather, the object blocking the light source is to blame for the shadow.

When it is said that the soul descends and declines by appearing in material forms, what is meant is that a material form can only be diluted and incomplete. No individual car can encompass the entirety of 'carness'. Further, the material manifestations of a soul require the material. When there is no more material left to participate in a soul, then the material manifestation of the soul ceases to exist. In such cases, all that is left is the essence, or the ideal form. In such cases, the soul only exists in the realm of Ideal Forms.

This distinction can be seen metaphorically in Homer's depictions of Hercules. Hercules' material body goes to Hades. Yet Hercules' essence remains in Olympus. Hercules' eternal virtues forever reside in the realm of Ideal Forms, but those parts of Hercules which required a material body are lost and destroyed. And so, part of Hercules is mortal, and part of him remains immortal.

13. **What is it that thinks?**

To conclude, what is it that thinks Intellectually? Is it 'our self', or is it our soul?

The answer is that it is 'our self' via the soul.

Our material body (and its body parts, such as the brain and nervous system) moves in patterns in accordance with the ideal form an Animated Body. These movements (such as the electrical movements in our brain) allow our body to engage in Intellectual though.

Does this mean that our Soul must have material which is moving to think? No, rather, its essence is within the realm of pure Intellectual reason. It 'thinks' via the 'movements' of causal chains of reasoning.

And so 'our self' engage in Intellectual thought in two distinct ways. One, by thinking Intellectually. That is to say, by being capable of acts of intellectual reasoning. Two, by participating in the Ideal Form of Intellectual reasoning itself.